

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 16 have been canceled and new claims 17 to 25 added to the application. New claims 17 to 25 are supported by the original disclosure of the present application and are not believed to amount to prohibited new matter.

In the Final Action of July 17, 2007, claims 1 to 4, 7, 8 and 11 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katoh et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,402,641 ("Katoh") in view of Leyrer et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,643,542 ("Leyrer").

Applicants respectfully submit neither Katoh nor Leyrer nor the combination thereof discloses or suggests the following feature described in new claim 17 of the present application: "the exhaust gas entering the second exhaust-gas state at an air-fuel ratio of more than 15 to 50, an exhaust-gas temperature being in a range of 200°C to 500°C at the inlet of the catalyst in the second exhaust-gas state". Furthermore, neither Katoh nor Leyrer nor the combination thereof discloses or suggests the use of a "catalyst being obtained by mixing the noble metal and the transition metal with or carrying the noble metal and the transition metal by a fire-resistant inorganic oxide having a BET surface area of 50 m²/g to 200 m²/g and having a pore diameter of 10 nm to 30 nm" as also recited in new claim 17. Thus, the combination of Katoh and Leyrer

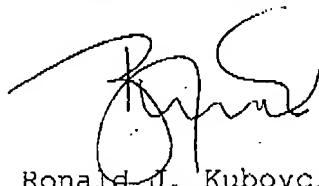
proposed by the Office fails to disclose or suggest all limitations of the claims of the present application and cannot support a case of prima facie obviousness on new claims 17-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Removal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of the claims is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

The foregoing is believed to be a complete and proper response to the Office Action dated July 17, 2007.

In the event that this paper is not considered to be timely filed, applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for any such extension any additional fees that are required may be charged to Deposit Account No. 111833.

Respectfully submitted,
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